1:Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
SA19 Talamanca SA19



776 and yet their priests give him twenty names, in their songs. These names, so far as I could ascertain, all refer to his qualities. One Bri-bri, whom I had with me as a servant for over half a year, and from whom I obtained much valuable information, particularly in regard to the language, said to me, "Why do you foreigners ask us how many Gods there are? There is only one, and that is *Si-bu'*."

The Devil, or devils, are minor personages, who receive no worship of any kind. They are called, *Bi*, by the Bri-bris and Cabecars, *As* in Tiribi, *AsA* in Terraba, and *Ku-gro'* in Boruca. The devil is generally malevolent, but does not seem to be specially feared. *Bi* among the Bribris is a term also used for a variety of lesser devils, or evil spirits who have special missions, like making people sick, &c. Some of these in-
776 habit the less frequented parts of the forests and mountains, and are
778 very jealous of their domains. People entering an unfrequented region, make as little noise as possible. If they make the local *Bi* angry with their noise, he will revenge himself by a shower or by causing somebody
[753] to fall and hurt himself, or to be bitten by a snake, &c. A person who has once been in these places can return with less risk, but all new-comers must keep at least a comparative silence. Another class of beings inhabit the rocks on the summits of certain mountain peaks. They live *inside* the rocks, not among them, consequently their habitations are undistinguishable to mortal eyes. They seem to have the same habits as ordinary humans. One of these peaks, a mile or two across a cañon, in front of a place called Sar-we, is thus inhabited according to the accounts of the people of Sar-we. They told me of hearing singing, the beating of drums, &c., coming from that direction. The configuration of the hills is such that a glance showed me, that a drum beaten at certain of the houses in the cañon of Urom, would echo back from this hill to Sar-we and thus account for the sounds. These people of the *U-jums*, as the naked peaks are called, are said to be the owners of the tapirs which roam through these solitudes. They are very jealous of their domains and cause, by some occult means, the death of any one who dares approach their homes. I could not induce an Indian to accompany us to the summit of Pico Blanco, partly on account of *bu-ku-ru'*, and perhaps more still for fear of the people of the *U-jum* or peak. In addition to
776 these beliefs, they also believe in the efficacy of incantation by their *Awas* or doctors, of whom more immediately; and further in certain ceremonies or observances of their own. I have seen a woman carefully collect a bunch of some weed and taking it to the river wash her face, neck,
[226] breast, and arms with it. This was to bring good luck to the men who were at the time at work turning a stream to dry its bed, for the purpose of catching fish. She had her reward.; hundreds of fish of 2 to 4 pounds weight were captured, and of a quality as fine as shad.

824 There is a peculiar wood, of which I shall have occasion to speak
293 further on, used only for walking sticks for the chiefs and more eminent
[481] persons. The growing tree is unknown and it is only obtained by the

I:Gabb N-5 (1873-1874) 1876
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622 301 [727] [422] to the reigning chief. The others were formerly also property of the chiefs, but are said to have been given as rewards of merit to the most successful leaders in the Tiribi war. The two belonging to the chief, as well as one belonging to the descendants of one of those warriors, all represent birds. The people call them eagles. The largest is between three and four inches across; the smaller of the chief's two, is double-headed. In connection with these "eagles" another royal emblem might ● 293 622 [532] be mentioned. It is a staff of hard black palm wood, over four feet long. The top is carved in the shape of an animal, not unlike a bear sitting on his haunches. But there are no bears in this country, and it must have been intended for some other animal. Below this figure, the stick is square, and is carved out into four pillars several inches long, with spaces between them. In the interior, between them, is a cavity in which a loose piece of the same wood can be shaken about. It was evidently left there in the carving, after the fashion of the Chinese. Below this, the stick is plain. I tried every means in my power to obtain this, but could not buy it.

525 Games of chance or of skill are equally unknown, and even when brought into contact with civilization, they do not seem to take kindly to gambling. In fact, they have so little to win or lose, and that little is so easily obtained, that the inducement does not exist.

262 [25] [224] [25] Their food is simple in material and there is but little variation in the manner of preparation. Of meats, besides chickens, they have beef and pork, which are however rarely used except at feasts. They know nothing of salting meat for future use and can only consume one of these animals when a large number is together. Besides the scarcity of beef is so great that probably no Indian possesses more than one or two animals at a time. Wild meat, like peccary, red monkey, (the other species are rarely eaten,) tapir, tiger, even otter, armadillo, and some other small animals are occasionally shot. In this case, all of the meat that is not eaten at once is dried as hard as a bone, and perfectly black, in the smoke of a slow fire. Larger species of birds like curassow are also treated in the same way. It is an interesting fact, universally attested, that the bones of this bird are absolutely poisonous to dogs, while the meat, though tough, is not unpalatable and is perfectly innoxious to man. After a meal it is the never-failing custom to gather all the bones carefully, and either burn them or place them out of reach of the dogs. I do not know whether the flesh would be equally dangerous, though I doubt if it was ever wasted on a dog. This property is said to be due to some fruit or seed they eat. Of vegetable food, plaintains are the staple. In times of scarcity, bananas take their place, besides being eaten raw when ripe. The Indians also occasionally eat a raw ripe plantain, although they are coarse 252 and the flavor is inferior. The methods of preparation are, roasted green, when they make a poor substitute for bread; roasted ripe, when they are eaten with chocolate, with the idea of sweetening it. They are also boiled green, with meat, with green corn, or even alone. Ripe plan-

2;Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri

SKINNER—BRIBRI PL. XVII

293
411
412
[532]

VARIOUS IMPLEMENTS

*a*, Planting dibble and war club, length 5'; *b*, Cacique stick, length 4' 7"; *c*, Blowgun, length 6' 10"; *d*, Bow, length 4' 10"

[Facing page 73]

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri



sometimes used. This is scraped over the rings with a large hard bean-like seed. It at least helps to add to the noise, if it does not contribute melody. A little flute, about as musical as a penny whistle, is sometimes added to the concert, though it seems rather to be looked upon as a toy. These flutes are made of a bone of some bird, perhaps a pelican. The bone has half-a-dozen holes drilled in it, and the end is plugged with wax, so as to direct the air to the larger aperture near the end. I bought one from a Tiribí made of a deer's bone. 534

"On very solemn occasions a curious box is also used. It is about eight inches long by four square on the end. It is carved out hollow, with a long tongue on one face, isolated by a U-shaped slit. A heavy handle is attached to one end, also carved out of the same block. When used, it is simply struck on the above mentioned tongue with a bone or piece of hard stick. This is only used on the death of a chief. There is but one in the tribe, and no bribe that I could offer sufficed to buy it."

*Cacique Sticks.*—These are long, cane-like staves, made of a dark, hard, heavy, reddish-brown wood called "cacique". As a rule they are entirely plain, but pl. XVII, *b*, exhibits an example of a type, now said to be obsolete, that has the figure of a man rudely carved on the handle. These canes are highly regarded, because of certain 293 [532] [757]

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri



293 757 astringent properties said to be contained in the wood, and they are sometimes scraped and the scrapings drunk with water as a curative. It is supposed to stop bleeding, and is also valued for intestinal ailments. [622] Formerly they may have been the property only of the headmen.

293 A stick once owned by Ramón's father, the old "king," was in the custody of Señor Alejo Jimenez, governor of Talamanca, who lives at Saporio. It was taken by the Bribri from a neighboring tribe, probably the Tiribi, in war, many years ago, and the Indians are very anxious lest it should pass out of their hands, since they say, "it cost us blood." This staff was seen by Gabb,[16] who states:

[532] "It is a staff of hard black palm wood, over four feet long. The top is carved in the shape of an animal, not unlike a bear sitting on his haunches. But there are no bears in this country, and it must have been intended for some other animal. Below this figure the stick is square, and is carved out into four pillars several inches long, with spaces between them. In the interior, between them, is a cavity in which a loose piece of the same wood can be shaken about. It was evidently left there in the carv-

2:Skinner E-5 (1917) 1920
SA19 Talamanca SA19
Bribri



ing, after the fashion of the Chinese. Below this, the stick is plain. I tried every means in my power to obtain this, but could not buy it." 293 ●

The stick, which was seen by the writer, is still unobtainable.

*Gold Ornaments.*—Pendants of gold were formerly worn as chiefs' insignia, and, it is said, were also given to successful partisans in the Tiribi war. They are now nearly a thing of the past, as the whites have long eagerly sought and purchased them. These ornaments were made in the form of eagles (sometimes double-headed), alligators, and frogs, and were worn as breast-plates or gorgets. They no doubt were entirely similar to the antique forms from the graves at Las Mercedes. Señor Ricardo Fernandez Guardia[17] reproduces a photograph of Antonio Saldaña, father of Ramón and last "king" of the Bribri, with several large gold eagles round his neck. These eagles are also noted by Gabb.[18] 301 [622]

As the Bribri believe that death will overtake the Indian owner who sells one of these gold ornaments, it may be that there are really more of them in existence than the 784. [763]

6:Stone E-5 (1956-1959)1962
[P103(A)] SA19 Talamanca SA19

643 defects. The following is an eye-witness account of the young ruler at the beginning of this century:

> . . . from the first moment, I saw that that man was more than mediocre. . . A man born to govern; who was law to his people, and who bore on his face the mark of sadness but not of depression. His countenance is that of a person who commands. . . . What a fine man! I thought, and yet, Antonio, king of the Talamancas, has in all Costa Rica the poor reputation of irrational idolatry and uncontrollable passions! [4]

His dress was always plain, like a mestizo, and could have been confused with that of any Indian if he had not been accustomed as a chieftain to wear a necklace with six gold eagles, a feathered headdress, and carry the staff which is associated with power. When he went to the capital, he changed his costume and wore an impeccable black suit, cotton shirt and boots, which must have bothered him considerably as he was used to going barefooted.

[301] [292] [293]

There is little information about his youth which seemed to have lacked the preparation for what his destiny decreed as it was not until 1874, when his uncle Willie assumed the power, that there was even a suspicion that he might be a possible successor. The scarce data available recounts that his mother was drowned in the Lari River and that in his youth, Antonio traveled to distant places such as Guatemala and Panama.[5]

643 797 648

The naming of Antonio as King practically coincided with the arrival of Bernardo Augusto Thiel, newly appointed Bishop to Costa Rica, who became the number one defender of the Indians. It was on the 4th of July, 1881, during a visit to Boruca and Talamanca, that the Bishop first met King Antonio and Mr. Lyon. This opened a new era for the Talamancans as the churchman, according to one description, ". . . had the character of the Vázqueses de Coronado and the faith of the Antonio Margrils." [6]

Shortly afterwards, a letter of Antonio directed to the government of Costa Rica asking for aid gives evidence of his interest

[4] Segarra y Julia, 1907, p. 571.
[5] Tristán, 1922, p. 156.
[6] Fernández Guardia, 1918, p. 162.